

## **Bainbridge Island Chamber of Commerce Final Report for 2016 LTAC**

The project as outlined in Appendix A is the "*Bainbridge Island Visitors Information Center*". This incorporates all aspects of advertising, marketing, website management, event promotion, community promotion and operation of a tourism related facility.

The Chamber is pleased to work with the Downtown Association to help meet and greet our visitors/tourists. We also promote the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art and the History Museum. This year the Japanese American Exclusion Memorial has increased its presence on the island and received many more requests by our visitors/tourists for information on their location. Bloedel Reserve is one of the locations on the island that receives a great number of visitors/tourists. B.I Ride was very busy this year shuttling people around the island. B.I. Ride is the follow-up to the Frog Hopper created by the Chamber in a previous LTAC year. Groups listing above are some of the larger partners the Chamber works with, however, because of the nature of our membership and our place in the community, we partner/represent most groups or organizations on the island engaged in the visitor/tourism industry.

The Grand Old Fourth event this year retained its claim as the largest community event on the Island. Attendance was estimated at 40,000 people. All the rooms on the island were booked during the weekend and overflow was sent to Poulsbo, Silverdale and Bremerton. The population of the island is only 24,000 so many people come from across the water to celebrate with us. Many of the guests are staying with family as this is somewhat of a homecoming for some and a visitation of old friends for others. We estimate that as many as 20,000 people have travelled over 50 miles to visit us on the fourth. We estimate the increase at about 5.5%. Our website numbers were up approximately 6.6% which shows that people are using social media to find the information they need.

Our tourism facility located at the ferry terminal manned by paid staff and volunteers as well as the paid staff and volunteers in our offices on Winslow way are responsible for meeting our visitors and guests to provide them with up to date information. One of the responsibilities of these people is to track the numbers and record a visitor count. Our visitor count for this year shows we had visitors from all but two of the United States, all provinces of Canada and visitors from 42 countries around the world. We estimate that 118,000 visitors came to the island. Most of the visitors in our count are here for the day, staying in Seattle and taking a cruise to Alaska. There are 450,000 people who come to Seattle to take an Alaskan Cruise and many come over to Bainbridge during their stay in Seattle.

We feel that the objectives outlined have been reached and that the visitors were greeted and informed by our staff and volunteers who manned our office and the kiosk at the ferry terminal.

Regarding the budget, we had only one event that did not happen and that was the concierge convention which was not billed for. Except for \$156.27 in operation expenses, the budget was completed.

This has been a banner year for visitors and tourists and we anticipate 2017 being even busier due to the increase in local as well as regional activities attracting people to Bainbridge Island. The Grand Old Fourth in 2017 will celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> year that the Chamber has hosted the event.